

Abstract 577

TITLE: Developing a Statewide HIV/AIDS Training and Technical Support Program for Substance Abuse Treatment Systems.

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ISSUE: The dual epidemics of HIV and substance abuse continue to impact the lives of injection drug users and their partners and families. Nearly 40% of all AIDS cases in Massachusetts are directly related to injection drug use (IDU), while the rates of infection for sexual partners of IDUs continue to grow. Hence, the primary and secondary HIV prevention and harm reduction education among both active users and consumers of substance abuse treatment remains an integral component in the challenge of decreasing risk of transmission.

SETTING: Within Massachusetts statewide substance abuse treatment system.

PROJECT: SPHERE, the Statewide Partnership for HIV Education in Recovery Environments, provides comprehensive HIV support services to substance abuse treatment settings across Massachusetts. Integral components of this program include ongoing needs assessment and planning, coordination/collaboration, consultation and technical assistance, training and education, and resource/materials development. All services are delivered with competency in culture, language, gender, disability, age, and sexual orientation.

RESULTS: Providing HIV prevention and education within substance abuse treatment settings provide for a unique set of complexities. Providing support services which address such complexities is essential as substance abuse treatment staff are in an optimal position to educate clients about HIV transmission, risk/harm reduction, treatment and to implement and support prevention interventions.

LESSONS LEARNED: Implementing HIV education, risk reduction policies, programming, and technical assistance, tailored to meet the special challenges inherent in substance abuse treatment settings provides a comprehensive and effective approach toward system-wide change.

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